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J By SEAN MCCORMALLY  
WASHINGTON

Top senators are still in the dark about key elements of President Reagan's secret arms deal with Iran, and they suspect the CIA had more to do with it than has been told so far.

In the opinion of Senate Republican leader Robert Dole of Kansas, the lingering mysteries -- including whether the weaponry was worth \$12 million or \$100 million -- persist either because of "intentional withholding" of information by top Reagan aides or because members of Congress "haven't asked the right questions."

But lawmakers are divided over whether legal changes are needed to rein back the National Security Council, the White House agency that masterminded the Iran operation; to specify how long the president has to tell Congress of secret operations; and to change the Arms Export Act notification requirements.

The Wall Street Journal, quoting U.S. intelligence sources, reported today that some of the U.S. arms shipped to Iran were intended for Moslem guerrillas battling Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

The newspaper said national security adviser John Poindexter and other officials told congressional leaders last week that one purpose of the Iran operation was to open a new supply route to the hard-pressed Afghan rebels.

The Journal also reported that the Iranians offered to send the United States a Soviet-made T-72 tank captured from Iraq. But the newspaper added that the sources said the Iranians have not delivered, in part because of the publicity about their dealings with the United States.

A While official Washington was buzzing Sunday over speculation Reagan might dismiss some top aides, including Poindexter or Secretary of State George Shultz, CIA Director William Casey and his agency were pulled closer to the center of the controversy.

P Appearing on NBC's "Meet the Press," Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., said lawmakers looking into Reagan's controversial 18-month effort to improve relations with Iran and win freedom for American hostages in Lebanon still have "some real problems" with the official explanations.

"We have not heard ... all we're going to have to hear from the CIA on this one," Nunn said. "They were more involved than we thought they were."

' Sen. David Durenberger, R-Minn., outgoing intelligence committee chairman, said controlling the NSC is not the crucial issue.

"The problem is not so much the NSC as it is the operations director of the Central Intelligence Agency," he said. "And the person who obviously has responsibility for that, as well as responsibility for the conduct of some of our more unorthodox national security activities is the director of Central Intelligence."

But when asked if he was saying Casey should be replaced, Durenberger said, "I am not." That decision, he said, is Reagan's.

Sen. Dale Bumpers, D-Ark., said on CBS's "Face the Nation" he believes there must "be some changes in the law."

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He said Reagan "obviously violated" the "timely" notice requirement of the National Security Act. He also cited a cash-value limit in the arms acts, which set a \$15 million trigger for congressional notice.

Officials had told Congress the weapons sent to Iran were worth \$12 million, but Bumpers revealed, "Now we're told it could be at least as much as \$100 million that was agreed to."

A senior official told Newsweek magazine, "So far as we can tell, as much as \$50 million (of supplies) appears to have been sent to Iran directly from the United States.

But the official, quoted in the magazine's edition released Sunday, added, "When you add in the quantities shipped from third countries, primarily Israel, the total could be \$100 million or more."

Dole, also on CBS, noted he and other congressional leaders had a briefing from key Reagan aides and "we thought we were told everything." But faced with subsequent disclosures and statements, he said, "I would guess we were not told.

"Now whether it's an intentional withholding or just we haven't asked the right questions, I would say we don't know all the facts," Dole said.